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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

Two Houston women indicted in federal kidnapping, forced labor case

A federal grand jury in Houston has indicted two women on charges of kidnapping, forced labor and abuse of a minor. According to prosecutors, the women allegedly abducted a child and compelled the minor to work while subjecting the victim to abusive conditions. [Click here](#) to read more.

Six men arrested, three victims rescued in central coast sex trafficking sweep

San Luis Obispo County's Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force rescued three female sex trafficking victims and arrested six people during a January 2026 enforcement push tied to the statewide Operation Reclaim and Rebuild, the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office and District Attorney Dan Dow announced. [Click here](#) to read more.

Roanoke bridal shop tied to human trafficking, drug dealing operations

ROANOKE, Va. (WDBJ) - An illegal sex operation stretching across a number of our hometowns has been broken up. At the center of the investigation, a building that is also home to a dress shop. Prosecutors say Amanda's Touch, a bridal shop in Roanoke, was a "front" for prostitution and human trafficking. [Click here](#) to read more.

TAT holds two Coalition Builds in February

Prince Edward Island

In partnership with the Government of Prince Edward Island and the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association, TAT held a Coalition Build (CB) in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (PEI) on Feb. 11. Event attendees included people from several departments within the provincial government, as well as the RCMP, Charlottetown Police Service, The Native Council of Prince Edward Island, the Cooper Institute, EVENforONE, PEI Rape & Sexual Assault Centre, Prince County Hospital, the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association, several trucking companies, and more.



At the Prince Edward Island Coalition Build, TAT Director of Public Sector Engagement Dylan Wecht (far right) had the opportunity to chat with (L to R) Sgt. Derrick Blanche and Constable Kevin MacKay, both of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

The Honourable Ernie Hudson, the Government of Prince Edward Island's Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Honourable Jenn Redmond, the Government of Prince Edward Island's Minister of Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, provided opening remarks. These were followed by a human trafficking 101 presentation led by Constable Kevin MacKay of the RCMP L Division and France Young, the PEI Education and Advocacy coordinator for EVENforONE. TAT Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives Annie Sovcik provided context on the intersection of human trafficking and the transportation industry, as well as shared how TAT can assist both public sector and private industry partners in this fight.

Karly Church, the Human Trafficking Program coordinator and survivor advocate with Victim Services of Durham Region, participated in a multi-disciplinary panel as well as shared her experience as a survivor of sex trafficking and her experience providing victim services and advocacy through her current role in Ontario.

"Prince Edward Island has already been working closely and diligently with TAT for five years now," commented Dylan Wecht, TAT director of Public Sector Engagement, "and has been able to complete every step of the Canadian Motor Vehicle Enforcement Model, participate in the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance's (CVSA) Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative annually, host law enforcement trainings and now host their first Coalition Build."

Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Ernie Hudson, Government of Prince Edward Island, said, "When communities understand the signs of human trafficking and stand together to confront it, we send a powerful message: exploitation has no place here. And our transportation sector is uniquely positioned in this effort. Drivers are the eyes and ears of our highways, moving through the very places traffickers often use. Their awareness and vigilance make them one of our strongest lines of defense."

Miami-Dade YOT CB

On Feb. 19, the TAT team headed to Miami for the fourth CB of the year, co-hosted by Florida Highway Patrol, the Florida Office of the Attorney General, the Florida Public Transportation Association and the Miami-Dade County Human Trafficking Coalition. The half-day event convened 45 attendees from passenger transportation, law enforcement, government agencies and other key local stakeholders to explore strategies for protecting youth from exploitation and trafficking as they move throughout their days.

Miami-Dade Transit is the largest transit agency in the state of Florida, and the 15th largest across the United States. All students who attend public, charter or private schools in Miami-Dade County are eligible for a K-12 EASY Card, which offers half-price fares. Simultaneously, Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Department of Transportation transports roughly 43,000 students daily.

"TAT's Youth on Transportation (YOT) Initiative focuses on communities where we know a large percentage of youth are using community transportation -- both school and public transit -- to move throughout their days, recognizing the role these transportation systems can play in protecting youth, as well as reaching youth and their caregivers with information about trafficking. For this reason, Miami has long been on our wish list of places to host a YOT CB," said TAT's Director of Industry Engagement Lexi Higgins. "I am thrilled we had so many representatives from the motorcoach, transit and school transportation industries in the room today who were eager to strengthen their role in combating human trafficking throughout Miami and Southern Florida."



Youth on Transportation's (YOT) Safety Month in May was a primary focus of the Miami-Dade Coalition Build. Here, Lexi Higgins, TAT director of Industry Engagement, presents on YOT.

The day's agenda featured opening remarks from Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier, as well as a multidisciplinary panel, moderated by TAT's Director of Strategic Partnerships Sara Sefried and composed of Lynn Guyton, executive director of the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking; Rita Peters, special counsel with the Office of the Florida Attorney General; Stacy Miller, director/CEO of Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works; Major Thomas Pikul, Troop Commander with Florida Highway Patrol's Office of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement; and Yaneth D. Baez, assistant state attorney-Human Trafficking for the Office of the State Attorney. TAT Training Specialist and Survivor Leader Kelley Marshall provided her perspective and lived experiences as well.

Throughout the day, attendees participated in discussions about how events like the upcoming FIFA World Cup (during which Miami will host seven matches) and annual Formula One Miami Grand Prix in May could open up opportunities to strengthen public-private partnerships to combat human trafficking. TAT's Freedom Drivers Project was also on-site for attendees to tour.

Two new associations invite TAT to present at conferences



TAT Director of Industry Training Heather Fry presented at the Arizona Moving Association conference in February.

Arizona Moving Association Conference
TAT Director of Industry Training Heather Fry and Mobile Exhibits Specialist Micah Larsen participated in the Arizona Moving Association's (AZMA) 3rd Annual Conference Feb. 4-5 in Mesa, Arizona.

Fry presented to 85 attendees, highlighting the realities of human trafficking and the role movers and in-home delivery personnel can play in recognizing red flags as they go into homes and businesses. Forty-five people toured the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP).

"Our partnership with TAT through the 3rd Annual Arizona Moving Association Conference reflects a deep commitment to protecting the vulnerable and ending human trafficking," stated George Phillips, secretary/treasurer for AZMA. "Movers are in a unique position to notice what others may miss — in neighborhoods, on the road, and in everyday communities. By bringing awareness and training into our industry, we are turning everyday workers into everyday protectors. This collaboration shows that our industry stands for more than business — it stands for people, accountability, and real change."

Colorado Association of School Executives Conference

TAT connected with school transportation leadership on Feb. 20 at the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) Conference in Loveland, Colorado. TAT Training Specialist Louie Greek detailed resources and ways schools can be involved in the upcoming events and campaigns TAT is hosting which involve youth transportation services, including Youth on Transportation Safety Month. Following the presentation, the Colorado Department of Public Safety director pledged to add a link to TAT's human trafficking awareness training to their website.

"This was TAT's first time presenting at the CASE conference," Greek said. "It was the perfect event to engage Colorado's student transportation leadership with TAT's programs and encourage them to participate in one of TAT's many events around the state. Everyone who heard the TAT presentation walked out of the room with a goal in mind on how to implement TAT's resources to combat human trafficking within their professional sphere and beyond."

Nebraska working on bill to require anti-trafficking training at CDL training sites

TAT Deputy Director and Senior Director of External Affairs Kylla Lanier testified before the Nebraska Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Nebraska Legislature on Feb. 17 in support of Legislative Bill 1073, which would require anti-trafficking training for commercial drivers enrolling in CDL training sites throughout Nebraska.

The bill is sponsored by Senator Carolyn Bosn. In addition to Lanier, Kent Grisham, president of the Nebraska Trucking Association, the Office of the Attorney General and a Nebraska NGO all testified in favor of the bill. No one opposed or provided neutral testimony.

The bill, which would not impact current drivers, passed out of committee with a vote of 8-0. It now moves to the full legislature for a vote.



In February, TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier (center, front right) testified in support of a bill that would require anti-trafficking training for commercial drivers enrolling in CDL training sites throughout Nebraska.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 1-3 – Truckload Carriers Association Conference, TCA, Kissimmee, FL

March 2 – California Association of School Transportation Officials 58th Annual State Conference, California DOE, Burbank, CA

March 2 – Kitsap County Human Trafficking Task Force Training Conference, Gig Harbor, WA

March 3-7 – CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2026, Bridgestone, Haltec, Turtle Plastics, Las Vegas, NV

March 5 – Big Machines-Big Fun-Big Mission Fundraiser at CONEXPO-CON/AGG, Bridgestone, Haltec, Turtle Plastics, Las Vegas, NV

March 6 – Online Sexual Exploitation, Tulsa Tech, Tulsa, OK

March 18 – Alliance Against Human Trafficking Multidisciplinary Team Meeting, virtual

March 23 – Virginia State Police: Motor Carrier in Service Virtual Briefing, virtual

March 24 – Akron, OH Trucking/Truck Stop Coalition Build hosted by Bridgestone, Office of the Ohio Attorney General, Haltec and TAT

March 24 – TANY Press Conference and Day at the Capitol, Trucking Association of New York, Albany, NY

March 24 – Morning Huddle: Game Plan for Anti-Trafficking Strategies, Washington State Department of Transportation, virtual

March 26-28 – The Mid-America Trucking Show, Louisville, KY

March 26 – OERB Workshop: Combating Human Trafficking: How the Energy Industry

March 9-10 – TA Junction Briefing, TA/Loves, Akron, OH
March 10 – TA Junction Briefing, Travel Centers of America, Lodi, OH
March 10 – Real Women in Trucking Labor Trafficking Webinar, virtual
March 11 – TA Junction Briefing, Travel Centers of America, North Canton, OH
March 10-12 – Spring Clapham Accelerator Event, Eaglefund, Austin, TX
March 12-13 – Safe House Project's Anti-Trafficking Alliance Conference, Charlotte, NC
March 12 – Loves Junction Briefing, Loves Truck Stops, Akron, OH
March 15 – American Trucking Associations Moving & Storage Conference Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN
March 16 – Community Action Against Human Trafficking Rotary Club Meeting, virtual
March 17 – Virginia State Police: Motor Carrier in Service Virtual Briefing, virtual

Can Disrupt Human Trafficking Networks, Oklahoma Energy Resource Board, virtual
March 28 – 2026 Eastern Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) Safety Summit, University of Massachusetts, Northampton, MA
March 31 – Kansas City, Missouri Trucking/Truck Stop Coalition Build hosted by the Office of the Missouri Attorney General, the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Missouri Trucking Association and TAT



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